

**DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT****DECLARATION OF AREA OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST AT PARIS ISLAND BIG, COUNTY FERMANAGH. ARTICLE 28 OF THE ENVIRONMENT (NORTHERN IRELAND) ORDER 2002.**

The Department of the Environment (the Department), having consulted the Council for Nature Conservation and the Countryside and being satisfied that the area delineated and described on the attached map (the area) is of special scientific interest by reason of the flora and fauna and accordingly needs to be specially protected, hereby declares the area to be an area of special scientific interest to be known as the 'Paris Island Big Area of Special Scientific Interest'.

This area is of special scientific interest because of its heronry. Paris Island Big is a steep-sided, wooded drumlin island in Lower Lough Erne. The topography of the island made it less suitable for agriculture than many of its neighbours, hence its present woodland cover. Paris Island Big has, in the recent past, been a highly significant locality for breeding Grey Herons in a Northern Ireland context, with more than 80 pairs having been recorded. During the period 2000 – 2003 Paris Island Big held an average of 33 pairs of herons. At least 86 pairs of herons were present on the site in 2006, representing more than 2% of the estimated all-Ireland population. The island therefore continues to be one of the most important heronries in the Northern Ireland.

The vegetation on the island is dominated by semi-natural deciduous woodland, with the summit supporting a grove of exotic conifers. The deciduous element of the woodland is dominated by Sessile Oak and also includes significant amounts of Sycamore, Holly, Birch and Ash. Mature trees within both woodland types provide suitable nest sites for herons.

**SCHEDULE**

**The following operations and activities appear to the Department to be likely to damage the heronry:**

1. Any activity or operation which involves the damage or disturbance by any means of the surface and subsurface of the land, including ploughing, rotovating, harrowing, reclamation and extraction of minerals, including sand, gravel and peat.
2. Introduction of grazing.



3. The application of herbicides, fungicides or other chemicals deployed to kill any form of wild plant, other than plants listed as being noxious in the Noxious Weeds (Northern Ireland) Order 1977.
4. The storage or dumping, spreading or discharge of any material.
5. The destruction, displacement, removal or cutting of any plant, seed or plant remains, other than for:
  - i. plants listed as noxious in the Noxious Weeds (Northern Ireland) Order 1977;
  - ii. normal cutting or mowing regimes for which consent is not required under paragraph 3 above.
6. The release into the area of any animal (other than in connection with normal grazing practice) or plant. 'Animal' includes birds, mammals, fish, reptiles, amphibians and invertebrates; 'Plant' includes seed, fruit or spore.
7. Burning.
8. Changes in tree or woodland management, including afforestation, planting, clearing, selective felling and coppicing.
9. Construction, removal or disturbance of any permanent or temporary structure including building, engineering or other operations.
10. Alteration of natural or man-made features, the clearance of boulders or large stones and grading of rock faces.
11. The killing or taking of any wild animal except where such killing or taking is treated as an exception in Articles 5, 6, 11, 17, 20, 21 and 22 of the Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1985.
12. The following activities undertaken in a manner likely to damage or disturb the wildlife of the area:
  - i. educational activities;
  - ii. research activities;
  - iii. recreational activities;
  - iv. exercising of animals.
13. Changes in game, waterfowl or fisheries management or fishing or hunting practices.
14. Use of vehicles or craft likely to damage or disturb the wildlife of the area.

## FOOTNOTES

- (a) Please note that consent by the Department to any of the operations or activities listed in the Schedule does not constitute planning permission. Where required, planning permission must be applied for in the usual manner to the Department under Part IV of the Planning (Northern Ireland) Order 1991.
  
- (b) Also note that many of the operations and activities listed in the Schedule are capable of being carried out either on a large scale or in a very small way. While it is impossible to define exactly what is large and what is small, the Department would intend to approach each case in a common sense and practical way. It is very unlikely that small scale operations would give rise for concern and if this was the case the Department would normally give consent, particularly if there is a long history of the operation being undertaken in that precise location.